Environment protection programme

*93. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at a recent seminar organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government stated that inspite of the infrastructure and regulation set up to ensure environmental protection, the programme has not been successful due to a high level of non-conformance;

(b) whether this was generally due to lack of awareness in the society; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to improve the situation by increasing awareness?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) recently organised workshops in Chennai and New Delhi on Environmental Compliance and Enforcement in collaboration with the World Bank Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The workshops debated that non-conformance was, amongst other things, due to lack of environmental awareness in the society. The steps taken by the Ministry for creating environmental awareness include the following:

(i) Training programmes are organized through the training institutes.

(ii) Workshops/seminars/symposia are held from time to time which are target specific and issue specific.

(iii) A project has been taken up for capacity building of the enforcement agencies.

(iv) Financial assistance is also provided to the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and other institutions for the purpose of organizing awareness programmes.

(v) For better compliance and awareness, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is using electronic media for publicizing the air quality data of selected cities for wider dissemination.

(vi) A Cell has been set up in the CPCB to organize interaction meetings with NGOs from various States to conduct mass awareness programmes.

(vii) CPCB is bringing out a quarterly newsletter "Parivesh' for creating mass awareness on various aspects of environmental protection in the country.

(viii) Information relating to control measures is also available on the web site of CPCB and MoEF.

Suspension of wagons placement orders

*94. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have suspended placement of orders for wagons, following detection of sub-standard and cheaper steel used in the manufacture of wagons, replacing the quality steel supplied by Government; and

(b) if so, the names of the companies and the number of wagons for which orders were placed by Government?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Initially certain vigilance checks were conducted on wagons where it was found that a manufacturer *viz.* M/s. Hindustan Development Corporation had used cheaper mild steel in place of corten steel being supplied by Railways to wagon manufacturers as free supply item. In the process of inspection by Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO), use of mild steel in place of corten steel was also found in the factory premises of M/s. Burn Standard/ Howrah and M/s. Texmaco. Recent vigilance checks show that few more manufacturers have also been found to have used mild steel in place of specified corten steel in manufacturing of wagons. These firms are M/s. Texmaco, M/s. Burn Standard/Burnpur, M/s. Burn Standard/Howrah, M/s. Bharat Wagons and Engg. Ltd./Muzaffarpur and M/s. BESCO. It has, therefore, become necessary to carry out more joint comprehensive checks on all wagon manufacturers in order to assess the quantum and magnitude of the problem before release of further orders.

Wagon orders on various wagon manufacturers outstanding as on 1.4.2001 is as per the statement enclosed.